DEMOCRATIC
GERMAN REPORT

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For a whole week late in October, the American occupation forces in West Berlin staged a series of "frontier incidents" in the centre of Berlin apparently designed to provoke incidents and thus make negotiations on a peaceful negotiation of the West Berlin problem more difficult. The incidents consisted in the main of short sallies by small bodies of heavily-armed US Military Police into the territory of the German Democratic Republic, and the demonstrative deployment of heavy tanks with their guns pointing into East Berlin. The attempts to provoke incidents failed, owing to the restraint and cool-headedness of the frontier guards of the German Democratic Republic. At the end of the week, after sharp protest notes from the Government of the German Democratic Republic and the Soviet authorities, the US Government ordered that the series of incidents be brought to an end.

Here is a summary of the events of the week, with comments from Britain, the USA, West Berlin, and the GDR:

October 22nd: Allan Lightner, US State Department representative in Berlin, drove up to the GDR frontier control point at Friedrich Strasse, Berlin, in a civilian car. When he was asked by GDR frontier guards to show his passport, as all civilians passing the frontier must do, he refused and was refused permission to pass. Nine US military police with fixed bayonets thereupon marched about 80 yards into East Berlin, and escorted the car back to West Berlin. Simultaneously US tanks made a "demonstration of strength" on the western side of the border. A US spokesman said Lightner had been "detained by the Communists for unknown reasons" ("NY Times", October 23rd).

October 23rd: The Ministry of the Interior of the GDR issued a statement pointing out that the GDR frontier control post at Friedrich Strasse, East Berlin, had orders to pass foreign citizens who showed their passports. "Persons in civilian clothes coming from West Berlin attempt to evade this regulation, which is fully in accordance with international law, by claiming to be members of the occupation forces stationed in West Berlin, or members of the US Mission" the announcement stated. "It is pointed out once again that civilians entering the GDR must show identity papers, in accordance with the rulings of the GDR authorities and international law".

General Albert Watson, US Military Commandant in West Berlin, sent a note to his Soviet opposite number, Colonel Andrei Solovyev, claiming that American civilians had the right to enter East Berlin without identifying themselves to the GDR frontier control. He failed to explain how the GDR officials could see that the civilians were in fact occupation personnel if they were in civilian clothes.

October 24th: The West Berlin newspaper "Tagesspiegel" described the US invasion of GDR territory as "A Positive Incident", stating: "It is very pleasing to see the quick and energetic reaction of the Americans who forced their way into the Soviet Sector with fixed bayonets". The newspaper noted with dismay, however, that it was the practice of "British allied personnel, and sometimes also members of the French forces, to show their identity cards to East German functionaries." On this date, and later throughout the week, American, British and French members of the occupation forces in uniform were passed straight through the frontier post, and British officials in civilian clothes were passed as soon as they held up their identity cards, as they always did.

Five-Second Editorial

American military antics on the state frontier of the German Democratic Republic in the Friedrich Strasse, Berlin, just show how urgent it is to hold proper negotiations to reach an agreed solution of the West Berlin problem.

In the evening US military police in jeeps made a renewed short armed sally into East Berlin after a US citizen in civilian clothes had refused to show his papers.

October 25th: The US Commander in Berlin visited his Soviet opposite number to protest against "interference with US rights". The Soviet officer was reported to have indicated that this was a question for the GDR authorities, and did not fall within his competence. "NY Times" reported: "Officials (in Washington) emphasised that there were two issues involved... First, they said, is the right of officials of the three Western occupying powers to travel freely throughout Berlin. Second, there is the question of the authority of the East German police at the border points. The Western powers do not recognise the East German Government and therefore do not recognise the right of the East German police to demand identification of Western personnel." Political observers in East Berlin pointed out that if this "non-recognition" was taken to its logical conclusion, western cars in East Berlin would also have to drive through red traffic lights, which are also operated by East Berlin police.

During the course of the day American tanks paraded on the

(cont. on next page)

frontier, the US garrison in West Berlin was put on alert, and US military police staged another "military demonstration" lasting four minutes, in East Berlin.

In the evening the GDR Government addressed an official protest note to the US Government, which stated in part: "These incidents constituted planned acts of military provocation, which plainly had the aim of occasioning an armed conflict. This aim is emphasised by the battle-order equipment of the occupation troops who made the penetration; by the fact that the troops penetrated beyond the frontier control point into the territory of the GDR; and by the fact that the act of aggression was repeated. The Government of the GDR draws the attention of the Government of the USA to the fact that it is only due to the restraint and cool-headedness of the frontier control agencies of the GDR that complications were avoided. The Government of the GDR demands categorically that the Government of the USA calls to account the persons responsible for the acts of aggression, and punishes them severely. The Government of the USA knows that it has no rights in the GDR, including its capital. Despite this, the Government of the GDR is ready, pending the conclusion of a peace treaty with the GDR, to permit foreign citizens in civilian clothes, who are stationed in West Berlin, to enter the capital of the GDR when they show a valid identity document."

October 26th: US military police made two more hundred-yard sallies into the territory of the GDR to "rescue" American civilians who had deliberately refused to show their identity papers to GDR frontier control officials. Heavy American tanks again stood by. The West German Government, which has no voice in the dispute since West Berlin does not form part of West Germany, and since no West German citizens were involved, issued a fulsome statement stating that "the powerful reaction of the western allies is the only possible and correct answer to Soviet Zonal interference". "NY Herald Tribune" reported: "From today onward, informed sources say, planned incidents backed by soldiers will be staged by the United States at irregular intervals as a means of hitting back at the Communist effort to erode allied rights."

October 27th: "The Times" of London reported from Washington: "The present tense situation has arisen because of the refusal of American officials and American servicemen out of uniform to establish their identity with the East German crossing guards. The British have always been prepared to produce their papers, although they refused to hand them to East Germans. It was realised here today that Soviet officials crossing into the western sector had been similarly willing to have their papers scrutinised. This rather belated realisation ... sheds doubt on the much publicised allied co-operation."

During the afternoon, US military police with fixed bayonets again invaded East Berlin for a few minutes *(An eye-witness account of this incursion is given in "Berlin Notebook" on the back page).* Soon after the invasion, ten Soviet tanks, acting in accordance with the Warsaw Pact guarantee of the frontiers of the GDR, moved into position in the Friedrich Strasse one hundred yards inside East Berlin.

October 28th: The American and Soviet tanks were moved away from the immediate vicinity of the state frontier of the GDR, and the American forces in West Berlin abandoned, at least for the time being, their apparent attempts to provoke an incident. The legal questions involved were referred for settlement to Washington and Moscow.

Ernst Lemmer, West German Minister of All-German Affairs, made a last-minute personal attempt to make trouble by holding a press conference while standing on the white line in the Friedrich Strasse which marks the frontier between West Berlin and the German Democratic Republic. He was removed from the scene by US military police, who had received new orders to prevent incidents. "The Times", London, summed up in a leading article: "The risks are certainly there. There is always the danger that guns which are pointed may go off. Besides, the Russians may think that if the Americans can make armed forays into East Berlin, they can do the same into West Berlin. It is hard to imagine this sort of thing going on, say, for months without a serious clash. It would be like playing last across or seeing who can lean farthest out of the carriage window. Having made their stand on the law, the allies must press ahead with their approaches to negotiations."

A Letter to "The Times"

Sir, – On September 25 we wrote on behalf of 71 Labour members of Parliament to Mr Khrushchev and President Kennedy stressing our anxiety about the international situation, and especially about nuclear testing, and mounting tension over Berlin.

We asserted our belief that agreement over Germany could be reached on the following lines: (i) Guaranteed access to Berlin. (ii) Recognition of the Oder-Neisse line. (iii) Recognition of east Germany. (iv) No nuclear weapons or training in missiles for German troops in east or west Germany. (v) Disengagement in central Europe.

We have now received replies from both Mr Khrushchev and Mr Kennedy. Mr Khrushchev assures us that "the Soviet Government is ready to undertake the efforts to reach an early agreement, which, as you propose in your letter, would ensure the guaranteed access to Berlin, the recognition of the Oder-Neisse frontier, the recognition of the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, their admission to the United Nations, the prevention of the armed forces of the GDR and the FRG from being equipped with nuclear weapons and trained in the use of rocket-nuclear weapons, the disengagement of the armed forces of the Nato countries and those of the Warsaw Treaty in central Europe".

President Kennedy's reply says that he shares our concern over the possibility that the Berlin crisis may lead to war. He continues: "So far as Berlin is concerned, we are committed to no rigid formulas and are prepared to explore every reasonable avenue of approach. I mean to do everything in my power to bring about a peaceful and honorable solution to the Berlin problem – but I am sure that you realize that such a solution cannot be achieved simply by unilateral action on the part of the United States."

It appears, therefore, that Mr Khrushchev is ready to seek agreement on certain quite specific points, and that the President is much less rigid and intransigent than most of the speakers in last week's parliamentary debates. Is it therefore too much to ask that both East and West will abandon the dangerous posturing which has characterized their relations over the last few months, and so make possible real progress towards a relaxation of tension? And would it be indelicate to suggest that at this stage our own Government might take the initiative towards ending the deadlock?

Yours faithfully,
EMANUEL SHINWELL
ANTHONY GREENWOOD
FENNER BROCKWAY
House of Commons, Oct. 24

("The Times", October 25th 1961)

"There's Nobody Here But Us War Criminals"

By Ed Sears

(The following article, condensed from the excellent New York weekly "National Guardian" of October 2nd 1961, gives some details of the men behind the "German-American Chamber of Commerce", immensely powerful business pressure-group linking the big business of the USA and West Germany.)

The Board of Sponsors consists of 11 Americans representing big US firms, and of 17 Germans. Of the 17 Germans, at least 10 played an important part in the Nazi war effort, while at least one more represents a firm headed by a convicted war criminal. At least three of the 10 were on the U.S. war criminal list, at least another two served time in Allied jails, and at least six had high positions in firms which used slave labor.

One important sponsor is Dr Alexander Wilhelm Menne, vice president of the Federation of German Industries, the German equivalent of the National Association of Manufacturers. Menne is also a member of the board of Farbwerke Hoechst A. G., whose interests he represents on the German-American Chamber of Commerce. Farbwerke Hoechst is one of the three main successors of the notorious IG Farben, dissolved by the Allies.

Menne's boss is Fritz Jaehne, chairman of the board of Farbwerke Hoechst. During the war, Jaehne was one of Hitler's Wehrwirtschaftsfuehrers (war economy leaders). On July 30, 1948, a U.S. military court sentenced him to 18 months imprisonment for war crimes.

Jaehne is also represented in the Chamber by Max Klee, the group's president. Klee is also president of the Intercontinental Chemical Corp., whose offices are in the Empire State Building.

Another former IG Farben man on the Board of Sponsors was Ulrich Haberland, board chairman of Farbenfabriken Bayer AG, which "Fortune" (August, 1961) described as "the largest remaining chunk of the Farben Empire." As wartime manager of IG Farben's Bayer Chemical Works in Leverkusen, Haberland played an important role in the development of adamsit poison gas, forcing Soviet prisoners-of-war to produce this gas. According to testimony at the Nuremberg trials, adamsit gas, "despite gas mask protection ... works its way through the skin and has a destructive effect on the human organism."

(Haberland died Sept. 10, 1961.)

Chairman of the board of Farbenfabriken Bayer is Fritz ter Meer. Ter Meer, as managing director of IG Farben, was personally responsible for poison gas production and experiments on concentration camp prisoners.

On July 30, 1958, a U.S. military court sentenced ter Meer to seven years for war crimes.

Another sponsor is Dr Hans C. Boden, president and general manager of Allgemeine Elektricitaets Gesellschaft (AEG), the German General Electric. From 1925 to 1929 Boden was general secretary of the German Young Plan delegation, which obtained U.S. capital to prepare German industry for World War II. During the war, AEG was a major supplier of the armed forces. Boden, as its deputy chairman, played a key role in the whole Nazi war effort.

Sitting as a sponsor with Boden is Dr Hans Reuter, head of Demag AG, which builds cranes, bridges, port facilities and steel mills. Reuter became head of Demag in 1940, when the Nazis were beginning to roll through Europe. Demag expanded greatly from Nazi war contracts.

Another war profiteer who is a sponsor of the Chamber is Dr Hermann Reusch, president and managing director of Gute-Hoffnungs-Huette, a huge iron and steel complex. Hitler put Reusch in charge of incorporating the mines of Yugoslavia and Greece into the Nazi war production scheme. After the war, Ruhr workers refused to work under Reusch. When, in April 1948, the Western allies named him chief of the Control Commission for Steel Production, the workers threatened a general strike, forcing withdrawal of his name.

Dr Herman Winkhaus, another member of the Board of Sponsors, is head of Mannesmann AG, coal and iron steel combine with mines and factories in South America, Africa, Canada and Easton, Pa. Winkhaus served both as technical director of Mannesmann and as coal production coordinator for Nazi Germany during the war. Mannesmann was a company particularly favored by Hitler. It profited greatly from the use of slave labor furnished by the SS and it acquired many properties in Germany and the occupied countries through "Aryanization."

Konrad Kaletsch, another sponsor of the Chamber, was jailed for two years by U.S. authorities for the part he played in running the Flick industrial empire. The Flick concern was one of Germany's most notorious employers of slave labor. At Nuremberg, Friedrich Flick, wartime head of the concern, got a seven-year sentence for using slave labor and for contributing to the coffers of the SS.

Flick, who is now first vice-chairman of Daimler-Benz AG, manufacturers of Mercedes-Benz autos, was represented on the Board of Sponsors by Dr Fritz Koenecke, until recently general manager of the concern.

During the war Koenecke was the chairman of the board and manager of Continental Gummiwerke, a firm which, according to the U.S. Army, employed labor from Neuengamme ConcentrationCamp,and a board member of a large bank, Reichs-Kredit-Gesellschaft AG. This bank, through a subsidiary, supplied Franco's armies with arms in the Spanish Civil War.

The board chairman of Daimler-Benz is Dr Hermann J. Abs, who represents the Deutsche Bank on the Board of Sponsors. He, too, was placed on the U.S. Army list of industrial and financial figures.

Abs, furthermore, is a convicted war criminal. A court in Zagreb,

Quote to Note

"Bonn, Germany, Oct. 24 – The United States assured West Germany today that its promises to give Bonn's armed forces nuclear capability would be fulfilled ...

"A Defence Ministry spokesman said that the assurances given by Mr Gilpatric (US Deputy Secretary of Defence) should 'put an end, once and for all' to the reports of a change in United States defense policy that would discriminate against the Bundeswehr among members of the North Atlantic Alliance."

"New York Times", October 25th 1961

Yugoslavia, sentenced him, in absentia, to 15 years in prison for war crimes.

A bulletin issued in November 1946 by the U.S. Office of Military Government in Germany says of him:

"Abs was the guiding spirit of the villainous Deutsche Bank, which combined an unusual concentration of economic power with active collaboration in the criminal policies of the Nazi regime. Hermann Abs' Deutsche Bank acted as top agent of the German Government, and served the economic penetration of the satellite states and the occupied countries of Europe ... The foreign department of the Deutsche Bank rested in the hands of four men who worked under the supervision of Hermann Abs. He devoted his entire attention to extending German domination throughout Europe."

Under Hitler, Abs was the director of 40 companies, including the notorious IG Farben. He thus drew direct profits from the production of "Zyklon" gas, made by IG Farben for use in concentration camps.

He was also a member of the advisory council of the Reichsbank. The gold from the teeth of the murdered concentration camp victims was stored in the vaults of this bank.

Abs today plays a dominant role in West German economic life. He holds more positions as director or board chairman or vice chairman than any other man in the Federal Republic.

In 1954 he made the main economic speech at the convention of Adenauer's Christian Democratic Union. In April, 1955, Franco honored him with an official state banquet.

Adenauer has awarded him the Great Federal Merit Cross with Star.

At least two-thirds of the German-American Chamber of Commerce's German sponsors and the companies they represent thus played important roles in Hitler's drive for world rule. They represent Germany's industrial elite, the real power behind the Kaiser, Hitler and Adenauer.

To Americans who nurture the illusion that these men have changed their ways, the following information should be a sober reminder:

First, some of the men are the leading exponents of German rearmament. Just as they were eager to make profits under the Nazis' rearmament program, so are they eager to profit under Adenauer's.

Second, some of these firms have been shielding Nazi war criminals throughout the world. When Adolf Eichmann was living in Argentina, he was employed by Daimler-Benz, the firm of Abs and Flick.

Third, the July 1961 issue of the "German-American Trade News", the organ of the German American Chamber of Commerce, published a map purporting to show Berlin's trade pattern with the rest of the world. Included within the boundaries of Germany are not only the GDR but also Pomerania, Silesia, and East Prussia, which belong to Poland and the Soviet Union.

Political Trials in West Germany

The number of political arrests, trials and prison sentences in West Germany climbed sharply after the Bundestag elections in mid-September. In less than one month, more than 50 people were tried and over 20 arrested for "contacts with trade unionists in the East", "communist activities", distributing "subversive literature" or on similar charges.

On October 21st, a federal court in Karlsruhe sentenced Peter Umland and Artur Hoppe, both 66 and old-age-pensioners, to 3½ and 3 years respectively and three of their friends to 18 and 30 months in prison. They were found guilty of printing and distributing documents like the "Germany Plan" proposal of the GDR and Khrushchov's speech to the UN last year. Four of the convicted men had spent many years in nazi concentration camps. The fact that they were "old offenders" was stressed by the judge when sentencing them.

Only 5 days before Peter Umland, a veteran anti-fascist, was handed down his 3½ year sentence, a former Gestapo officer named Krumbach received exactly the same sentence for the proven murder of at least 827 Jews during the war. Krumbach, however, was freed on probation after his sentence.

In another trial conducted in late October against three Ruhr Valley workingmen, the judge also considered the anti-nazi record of one of the defendants to be incriminating. Using old nazi dossiers as part of the evidence, the judge told defendant Emil Tomy, "So you were working illegally — and that got you 2½ years in prison!" The three men are now on trial for having visited the GDR, and helping to arrange holiday trips to the GDR for West German children.

Hermann Weidlich, a young miner from Datteln, was sentenced to 18 months in prison for his activities in the trade union youth movement and for "violation of the ban on the Communist Party", although Weidlich had never been a member of that party.

Rudolf Blum, owner of a small printing plant near Cologne, was sentenced to 16 months in prison for printing leaflets protesting atomic armaments in West Germany.

Karl-Heinz Winstermann and Bruno Bachler from Duisburg were sentenced to 14 and 8 months respectively for meeting with members of the GDR's Free German Trade Union Federation and the French CGT trade union federation.

Elfriede Kautz, 53, and Gertrud Schroeter, 48, both leaders in an organisation which arranged for holidays in the GDR for needy West German children, were sentenced on November 4th to a year in prison and five year cancellation of voting and other privileges. Two other members of the group received nine month sentences. The charges ranged from "continuation of the forbidden Communist Party" to "leadership of an anti-constitutional association".

New U-Boat

West Germany's most powerful new U-boat, the U 1, was launched at Kiel on October 21st. The new submarine, described as the most powerful conventionally-driven submarine in the world, was launched by Frau Liselotte Kretschmer, wife of one of Hitler's U-boat aces.

Her husband, Rear-Admiral Otto Kretschmer, sank 44 allied vessels for the nazis in World War Two. He is today Commander of the amphibian forces of the West German Navy.

Speaking before the launching of the vessel, Admiral Kretschmer stated: "May the old spirit of the U-boat warriors drive you".

"But, daddy, you always told us they were extinct!"

(Cartoon from Daily Express, London)

You Ask – We Answer

What IS Happening in Berlin?

"The enclosed article from the local newspaper does not give too good an impression of the situation in Berlin. Before I can come to a fair and independent viewpoint, I feel I need more information concerning what is actually occurring in Berlin. Can you elucidate the position as you see it?

A. D., Nottingham, England

The article which our reader sent us from the "Nottingham Guardian Journal" of October 17th was entitled "Heartbreak at the Berlin Wall" and was fairly typical of many articles and news stories in the western press since the state frontier of the German Democratic Republic was established right through the middle of the city of Berlin on August 13th. It repeated many of the stories of split families, "valiant escapers", "inhuman Communist guards" and so on, which have been the stock-in-trade of many western journalists in Berlin for the past few weeks.

Let me say right at the outset that every sensible person in East and West must regret the erection of new barriers, new frontiers, and new obstacles to free international movement; but it is hypocritical for anyone to rail at the "Berlin wall" who does not work for international understanding and agreement, which alone would make the abolition of all frontiers and barriers possible.

For the fact which is always overlooked, intentionally or unintentionally, by the people who attack the state frontier through Berlin, is that it is a perfectly normal international boundary; it is similar both in form and purpose with the frontiers between many other states in the world.

There are, in fact, two "abnormal" features about the frontier line through Berlin:

1. It runs through the middle of a densely populated city, instead of through forests, along rivers, and over the tops of mountains, as most international frontiers do.

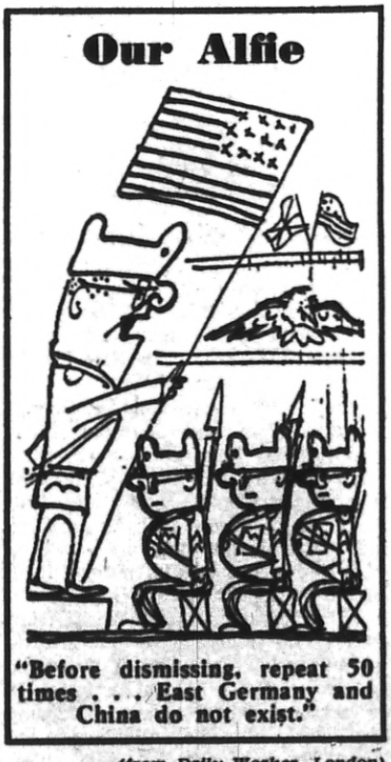
2. It was only established as a real barrier some twelve years after it had become the legal dividing line between two different territories.

The first point should be self-explanatory. A richly-convoluted frontier line through a densely populated area is obviously both more eye-catching and more difficult to guard than a conventional frontier line which generally runs along natural barriers such as mountain ranges or through sparsely inhabited areas. There are frontier guards even on such a "friendly" frontier as that between France and Belgium, and they not infrequently use firearms against smugglers and others who attempt to cross the frontier illegally. One difference is that there are no press-photographers and TV cameramen about to make pictures of the incident; and a second difference is that the authorities on one side of the French-Belgian frontier are not trying their hardest to provoke incidents, as the West Berlin authorities are.

The second point is perhaps not quite so plain, and for a fuller explanation it is necessary to go back a few years in history, and to pay some attention to geography too.

In 1945, after the Soviet troops had freed Berlin from the nazis, troops of the western powers moved into the western sectors of the city. For roughly the first three years of post-war history the city, which lies more than one hundred miles inside East Germany, was run with some success by an elected German City Council for the whole of Berlin, under the surveillance and control of the Four Powers.

As the western powers moved slowly away from the principles of the Potsdam Agreement (de-nazification, de-militarisation, breaking up the big trusts which had backed Hitler), and began to organise a separate West German state, they began to split Berlin too.



"Before dismissing, repeat 50 times . . . East Germany and China do not exist."

(from Daily Worker, London)

The crucial split came in June 1948, when the western powers unilaterally introduced a new currency in West Germany. A few days after introducing the new currency in West Germany they introduced it in West Berlin too, thus decisively splitting the city, since it was obviously impossible to run Berlin as a united city when two different currencies, of different value, were in use in the two halves.

A whole book would be needed to explain the complicated manoeuvres of the months following the currency reform, which were mainly marked by efforts on the part of the Soviet and East German authorities to economic and political unity of Berlin, and by efforts on the part of the western powers to split the city and establish West Berlin as a separate unit.

One of the manoeuvres is perhaps worth noting: the Big Four Foreign Ministers, meeting in Moscow, ruled at the beginning of August 1948 that the East Mark should be introduced as the sole currency in the whole of the city. If this decision had been implemented, it would have meant that Berlin could have remained a united city, and the whole course of history in central Europe would have been different. The details of the implementation were, however, left up to the Allied Commanders in Germany, and the western commanders, led by US General Lucius Clay, managed to sabotage this agreement and to establish West Berlin as a centre of constant irritation in the centre of East Germany.

In September 1949 the West German state was established, and one month later, in October, the German Democratic Republic was established with Berlin as its capital. Since October 7th 1949, the eastern part of Berlin, the Democratic Sector, has been economically and politically part of the German Democratic Republic, and has shared in the great change-over to socialism which has marked the development of the Republic.

West Berlin was left as an isolated capitalist island in the socialist sea, linked with West Germany by a common currency and many economic links. The western powers, however, for reasons of their own, vetoed West German attempts to declare

West Berlin an integral part of the West German Federal Republic, so that it has remained until today an anomalous territory, neither fish nor fowl. It is today the only part of Germany still under formal occupation by the victor powers of World War Two, and its main role has been to exist as a "thorn in the flesh of East Germany" as western politicians have repeatedly declared.

Logically, the authorities of the German Democratic Republic should have turned the sector border through Berlin into a regular state frontier in October 1949, when the partitioning of Germany was finalised, but this step was postponed again and again in the hope that German unity could be achieved.

With enormous patience, the Government of the German Democratic Republic witnessed the way in which the western powers built up West Berlin as a centre of subversion, espionage and economic sabotage against the German Democratic Republic, and refrained from taking the logical step of imposing a proper frontier through Berlin. In recent years the "open frontier" through Berlin has cost the German Democratic Republic a sum estimated at nearly £300 million annually, and this drain could not be allowed to continue indefinitely.

Finally, on August 13th 1961 the decisive step was taken, and a state frontier was established through the middle of Berlin.

This surgical operation, like all operations, was painful, but events since this date have shown that it was a necessary and useful operation. It has cleared the air, and there are encouraging signs that following the operation the powers concerned will sooner or later come together and negotiate an agreed solution of the West Berlin problem. This solution will create a demilitarised West Berlin Free City, which will be able to decide on its own social system and "way of life"; which will have guaranteed communications with the outside world; and which, instead of being a constant centre of friction between East and West will show the way forward to some form of co-existence and neutralisation of the two German states. **John Pee**

"I Meet a German (Democratic) Dustman"

By Royston Ellis

(Sensible reporting in the western press about everyday life in East Berlin and the German Democratic Republic generally is very rare, but it does exist. On this page we are glad to re-print an article from the London magazine "Today" (formerly "John Bull") for September 23rd which makes a very fair attempt to show life in East Berlin as it is. The author has, however, made a few minor errors of fact, upon which we have commented in brackets where they occur.)

I had come to East Berlin with one purpose — to meet a dustman. I stood at the meeting point, just a few yards inside the Russian zone of the city, which some Western observers have described as an "armed concentration camp".

Behind me were the frontier guards and barbed wire which divide East and West. On a bomb site across the road, were three East German troop carriers, each manned with youthful soldiers.

It was Horst's suggestion that had brought me to the Rosenthaler Platz. Horst is a nineteen year old labourer I met in one of West Berlin's beer parlours. A refugee from East Berlin, Horst had fled to the West a few months before, leaving his mother and twenty-two year old brother behind. It was his brother, the dustman, I was to meet.

In the distance I could see the dustcart coming towards me. It was shaped like a fat petrol tanker. There was a crew of three, the driver and two bin carriers. One of the carriers, a boy looking barely twenty, came over to me. He introduced himself as Harold. He explained that he would not finish work for another hour. He suggested that I go with his wife to wait for him at their flat. His wife was a pretty blonde girl I had noticed standing nearby. Her name was Lucia. She took me to their flat near Alexander Platz.

The shops we passed on the way there seemed well-stocked, although there was little variety in the goods offered. Bread was being sold at fourpence a loaf, and milk at threepence a bottle. Potatoes cost about a farthing a pound. Lucia told me that fresh fruit was scarce and costly. "Many children here," she said, "have never seen a banana." *(Bananas are scarce in East Berlin, but not this scarce, ed.)*

The flat consisted of a sitting-room, kitchen and bedroom. Lucia and Harold generally share their bedroom with two of their children, a three-year-old boy and an eighteen-month-old girl. Their third child, a baby girl only a few weeks old, sleeps in a cradle in the sitting room.

As a dustman, Harold works from six in the morning to one in the afternoon, six days a week. From his wages of £14 a month he pays 12s 6d a month rent. He pays no income tax and receives allowances of about 9s a month for each child.

"One of the best features about life here," he said, "is the medical service. This is especially good for children. Of course, a lot of things are bad, but it is better to look on the good things of life, I think. For instance, a friend of mine who works in a factory is sent away to the country for two weeks each year to pick potatoes. I would look on this as a holiday, not a state-inflicted disaster."

Harold emphasised that the State does not interfere with his way of life. He is not a Communist and seems completely unaffected by the political propaganda which we in the West are led to believe the Eastern-bloc peoples are subjected to. I asked him what he thought about Horst, his brother, fleeing to the West. "That was a mistake, I think," he told me, "Horst is young and rather lightminded. He went to the West because he thinks life is easier there."

Although this sounded like Party-line patter, meetings I had with East German refugees proved he was at least partly right. Many refugees I talked to, although justified in complaining of the way state policies interfered with their personal lives and liberties, did seem to have come to the West with the thought that life in general would be "cushy".

As it was Thursday — pay-day — Harold took me out for a drink at a beer-parlour. It was crowded. Beer in East Berlin is cheap by any stan-

dards. A glass costs just under 2d., cigarettes are fivepence for ten. *(The author errs in these and other monetary conversions. The cheapest cigarettes cost about 1/4 for ten, ed.)*

Soon after we sat down, we were joined by Harold's friends. Refugees had told me that East Germans are scared to discuss politics in public for fear of informers. This meant, they said, that any conversation in public tended to follow the patterns set by State decrees, instead of being expressions of what people really thought.

In this bar, however, I saw no evidence of such fear. Loud and critical were the comments I heard on a variety of topics from the latest space achievement to the price of butter.

Back at the flat, Lucia had cooked for us a meal which was typical of cooking throughout Berlin. It was smothered in grease. That evening, after the children had been put to bed, we went out. Lucia did not seem perturbed about their being alone for five hours.

"Sometimes in the evenings," said Lucia, "we just stay in and listen to the radio. We are lucky because we can receive Western programmes. That way we can work out what is propaganda and what is not.

"There is even politics in the cinema. That is why we used to go to see West Berlin films. Now we cannot go there we choose carefully what we are going to watch in our own cinemas."

At the cinema nearest the flat, I saw crowds of people streaming up the steps to watch a murder picture made in Bucharest.

"On Sundays," Harold told me, "there are special film shows for children. I used to come here every Sunday when I was young. This cinema has seen me grow up." The attraction for the forthcoming Sunday was a Chinese film.

We went into a place known as a library-café consisting of three white-washed rooms. In one room there was a long bar and in the others were tables with waiter-service. When we arrived there wasn't an empty seat. Young people, mostly students, were sitting around reading, playing chess, talking or just drinking. A band, with an electric guitar, accordeonist and drummer, played in a corner whilst couples danced.

Harold found a chess board as soon as one was free, and challenged me to a game. While Lucia browsed through some women's magazines, we played intently, sipping our beer and almost oblivious to the noise from the band.

Leaving the café, I thought my day with an East Berlin couple had come to an end. But no! Not a hundred yards from their flat — and this was not a fashionable area — was a night club. Showing their identity cards, a formality East Berliners have to follow whenever they want to buy anything, Harold and Lucia led the way in.

In the first room was the bar. Behind it was a room set aside for dancing. There was a mural here which beat anything I had seen in West Berlin for lewdness. *(Search as we would, GERMAN REPORT staffers have failed to find the "lewd" mural, ed.)*

Music was provided by the very thing I had not expected to find in the Russian zone, a juke box. Many of the records were English or American, including several jazz classics such as "Basin Street Blues." The nearest thing to "pop" music was Perry Como.

We left at one o'clock in the morning — three hours before closing time. As it was too late for me to catch the overhead railway to my flat in West Berlin, Harold and his wife let me stay with them and made a bed for me on the couch in their sitting-room. I had enjoyed my day with them in East Berlin. To me this friendly couple seemed typical of the young working-class generation there. I had learned that behind the panicking newspaper headlines, behind the brick wall and barbed-wire barricades, behind the propaganda barrage, there are people exactly like ourselves, living a life they are not only used to, but can also enjoy. I had seen happiness, not just despair, in that "armed concentration camp".

Comparison for Consumers

Here are comparative figures on consumption of a number of foods and other consumer goods in West Germany and the GDR. Unless otherwise indicated, all figures, which have been rounded off to the nearest unit, are for 1960.

Product	Unit	GDR	West Germany
Grain products	lbs per head	227	183
Potatoes	lbs per head	390	293
Sugar	lbs per head	67	60
Vegetables	lbs per head	142	159
Fruit	lbs per head	158	108
Meat	lbs per head	126	120
Textile fibre	lbs per head	28	25 (1958)
Shoes	Pairs per 1000 persons	3100	2600
Watches	Units per 1000 persons	151	97
Bicycles	Units per 1000 persons	28	13
Motorcycles, motor scooters, etc.	Units per 1000 persons	16	7
Cars	Units per 1000 persons	3	16
Radio sets	Units per 1000 households	899	868
TV sets	Units per 1000 households	167	253

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Birds of a Feather

Fourteen generals from Franco Spain arrived in West Germany on October 23rd to participate in West German military manoeuvres and discuss closer coordination between the military forces of the two contries. An American colonel stationed in Spain accompanied the group, which was headed by General Garzon, director of Franco's military school.

REC'D DEC 14 1961

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

One day last week, only a couple of hundred yards from my office in the Friedrich Strasse, Berlin, I thought for a moment that I was going to get impaled on the sharp end of an American bayonet.

It all happened in the course of the extraordinary "demonstration of force" indulged in by the Americans in the centre of Berlin, which we report fully on another page. I was standing a few yards inside East Berlin with a number of other journalists, flanked on one side by a man from TASS, and on the other by a man from AP, when an American Military Police jeep swerved at high speed across the border of the German Democratic Republic. The jeep slowed, and four hefty American MPs, in camouflage uniforms, with fixed bayonets, leaped out and nearly ran us through.

They then solemnly formed up on both sides of a small grey Volkswagen with three civilians in it, trotted about 50 yards into East Berlin, and then turned round and returned to West Berlin. It would all have been very comic, and in fact one American spectator called it the "Friedrich Strasse Follies of 1961", if it had not been so dangerous.

After all, whatever the rights and wrongs of the conflict might be, here were armed American troops invading a small part of the territory of the German Democratic Republic. There was no possible excuse for their action: they were not saving the lives of threatened American nationals, going to the aid of a damsel in distress, or intervening to quell a riot. The only possible explanation could be that they were hoping to provoke one of the GDR frontier guards to strike the first blow or fire the first shot. I must say I admired the coolness and level-headedness of the GDR police who watched the American comic opera with polite smiles.

Let me say something about the rights and wrongs of the case, because they have been very poorly reported in the western press. Since August 13th 1961, the previous "invisible frontier" along the border between West Berlin and East Berlin has become a full-blown state frontier. There are the normal frontier crossing points, at which anyone wishing to enter or leave Democratic Germany must show his passport.

Owing to the unclarified situation of the western occupation troops in West Berlin, and in order to avoid any possibility of a clash, the Government of the German Democratic Republic decreed that until the question of western troops in Berlin is properly settled, members of the western forces in uniform could pass the frontier into East Berlin freely. Occupation officials in civilian clothes must show their documents, to prove that they are in fact what they claim to be, but may also pass freely.

The British have always complied with this requirement, but the Americans, seeking a cause for conflict, refused to show identity documents, and then whistled up a show of armed force to crash the frontier.

Just imagine what would happen if a bunch of Russians came down the gangway at Idlewild Airport, New York, and brushed aside US Immigration officials, declaring loftily "We are Soviet diplomats: we don't need to show our passports". And just imagine further that when they were turned back by the US Immigration they disembarked a platoon of Soviet infantry with fixed bayonets who escorted them through. Imagination boggles: but that is a pretty fair parallel to what happened in Friedrich Strasse, Berlin.

* * *

The accounts on this and other pages of this issue of the recent alarms and excursions on the frontier between West Berlin and the GDR may give the impression that living in Berlin is like living at the front-line.

This is completely untrue. The whole scene of action of the American un-comic opera last week was confined to a short stretch of the Friedrich Strasse on both sides of the state frontier, and people outside this limited area went about their business as usual. Just to give you an example: I live in the Friedrich Strasse, a few hundred yards further up from my office, but when I got home after the biggest "frontier incident" on October 27th, my wife, who works at home, was completely unaware that anything unusual had been going on. The only hint that she had had had been that a US military helicopter had been clattering overhead for an hour or two, and one gets so used to plane noises that she had scarcely noticed. *(Query: Have you ever written a perfectly sensible sentence with three "hads" following each other? I cannot recall ever doing it before.)*

Apart from special incidents, life goes on extraordinarily normally in the city. Every visitor from abroad with whom I have spoken in the past few weeks has remarked on the fact that the people of Berlin, in both parts of the city, seem less perturbed about the "Berlin crisis" than people in other countries.

If you rely on western press reports you might get the idea that the state frontier through the city is the scene of a constant running battle with tear gas and shots. This too is simply not so.

I was driving a visitor from Britain round central Berlin a day or two ago, and when we passed a park I pointed to the children's playground where my daughter goes with her nursery school whenever the weather is fine. "Aren't you afraid to let her go there, so close to the frontier?" asked my visitor. The question had simply never occurred to me, although the wire fence which marks the frontier runs through the grass of the park only about 50 yards from the children's sand pit. Perhaps these two personal examples may help to put the news from Berlin into better proportion.

* * *

A new and quite fabulous peak of insolence has now been reached by the West German authorities. Not content with promoting nazi criminals to government posts of the highest authority, they have now started arresting people who fought against the nazi occupation troops and charging them with "war crimes".

As we go to press, there comes the news that the Yugoslav businessman Lazo Vracaric has been arrested in Munich and charged with "murdering German soldiers" in 1941. He was arrested on the basis of a warrant issued by the nazi authorities soon after the nazi invasion of Yugoslavia, when he was fighting as a partisan.

Allied soldiers such as Field Montgomery and General Eisenhower had better be careful about visiting West Germany: they might get arrested for having dared to invade the country.

* * *

In January 1962, GERMAN REPORT will be celebrating its tenth birthday. For our special birthday issue, which we are now planning, we would very much like to have some reader's reports on what they like about the paper (or what they dislike), as well as some short accounts of how they first came to hear of the paper, and what use they put it to. Please keep your letters short.

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